



Politics, Society, Self, and Others



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Introduction

This project investigates people's political views and their opinions of society, self and others. During the presidential campaign, there was a large focus on negative stereotypes and prejudice of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans. Discriminatory comments towards "dangerous illegal aliens" were abundant in the media. Such words can have a powerful effect; for example, those who perceive social groups as threatening are also likely to oppose immigration (Pereira et al., 2010).

There is a rising population of Hispanics in the United States (Census.gov); as such, many people are affected by the inflammatory language that became commonplace during the election. To reduce negative bias, it is necessary to understand the processes underlying prejudice.

The present research investigated, if the stereotypic and discriminatory references to Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants during the presidential campaign, resonated with political supporters. I predicted that those who supported and voted for the Republican candidate would respond with more negative attitudes towards Mexicans and Mexican-Americans than those who voted for a different candidate.

Method

Participants:

There was a total of 101 participants (67 women, 34 men) ranging from ages 18 to 48 years ($M = 19.98$, $SD = 3.54$) with self-reported race: Asian (3%), Black or African American (13%), Hispanic or Latino (36%), White or European American (43.6%) and Other (5%). Of the 101 participants, 39 indicated that they voted in the last presidential election; 21 voted for the Republican candidate, 18 voted for a different candidate.

Procedures:

Participants completed a series of questionnaires about their political views, their opinions regarding society, self and beliefs about Hispanics. To assess opinions about society, and self, participants first completed the following questionnaires:

- Affirmative Action Measure
- Social Dominance Orientation
- Authoritarianism-Conservatism-Traditionalism

Method (cont.)

Participants then viewed a video taken during the presidential campaign in which the Republican candidate discussed his views of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Mexican immigration.



Figure 1:
Video Screenshot

After watching the video, participants completed the following questionnaires:

- Opposition to Racial Policy Measure
- Negative Attitudes toward Immigrants
- Revised Anti-Mexican American Attitude
- Race-Specific Collective Self Esteem Scale

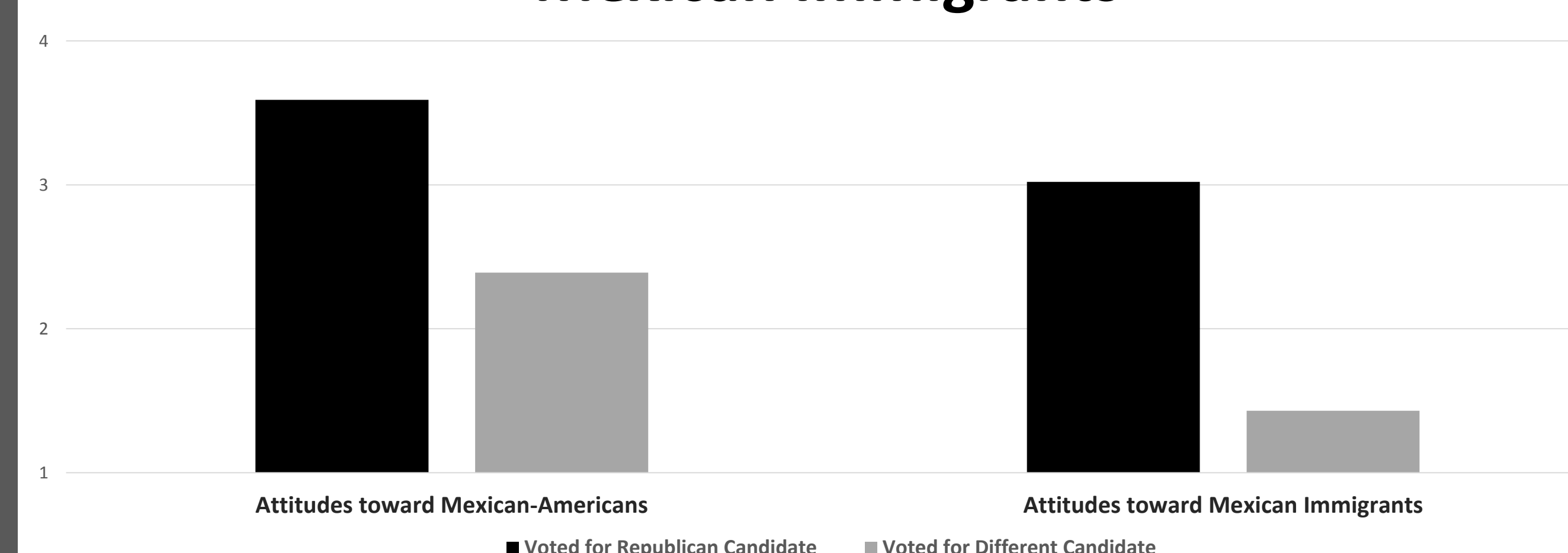
Results

To test my hypothesis that those who voted for the Republican candidate in the presidential election, would report more negative attitudes toward Mexican-Americans compared to those who voted for another candidate, I conducted independent samples t-tests. Figure 2 shows that those who voted for the Republican candidate reported more negative attitudes toward Mexican Americans ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .76$), than those who voted for another candidate ($M = 2.39$, $SD = .62$), $t(37) = 5.43$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.73$.

Additionally, those who voted for the Republican candidate reported more negative attitudes toward Mexican immigrants ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .95$), than those who voted for a different candidate ($M = 1.43$, $SD = .51$), $t(37) = 6.64$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.09$.

Figure 2:

Attitudes toward Mexican-Americans and Mexican Immigrants



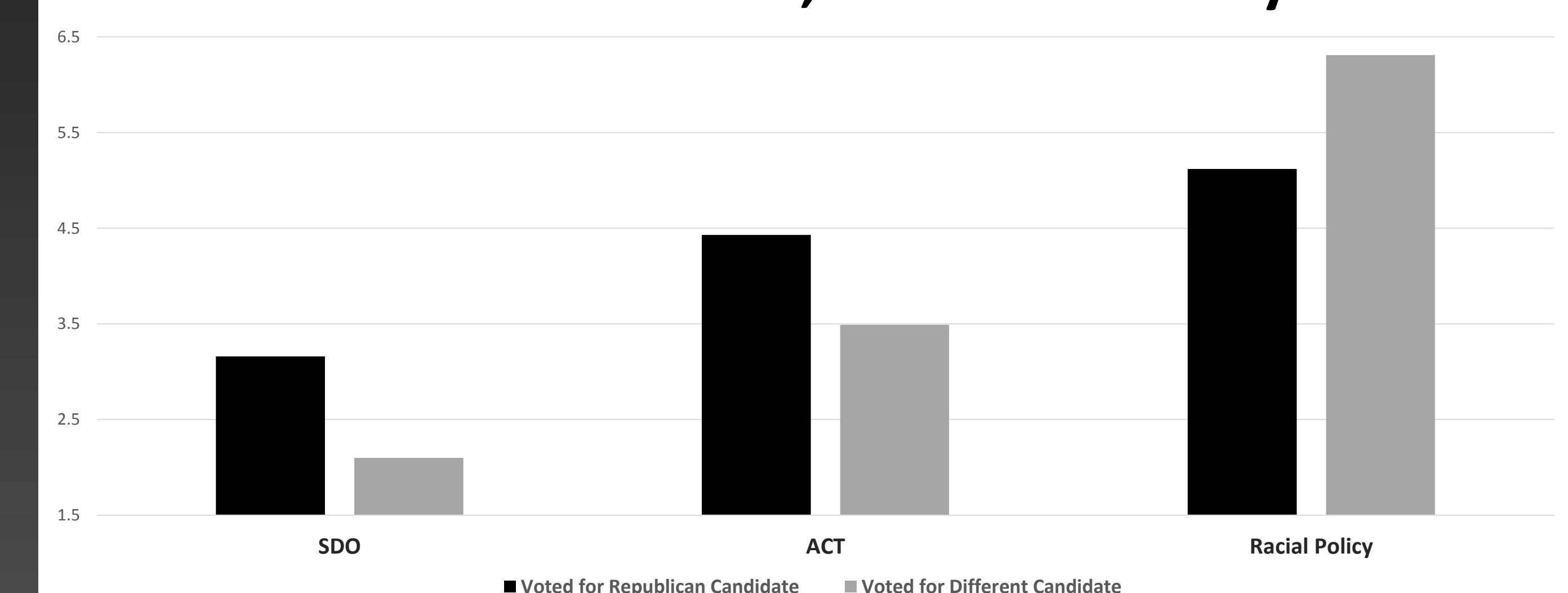
Results (Cont.)

As seen in Figure 3, additional analyses revealed that those who voted for the Republican candidate reported greater endorsement of social hierarchies and maintaining the status quo in American society (Social Dominance Orientation; SDO), $p < .001$, $d = 1.32$; and reported greater conservative and traditional ideals (Authoritarianism-Conservatism-Traditionalism; ACT), $p = .003$, $d = 1.05$ than those who voted for another candidate.

Also, those who voted for the Republican candidate reported less endorsement of policies that benefit racial minorities ($M = 5.12$, $SD = .96$), than those who voted for a different candidate ($M = 6.31$, $SD = .78$), $t(37) = -4.25$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.36$. No other significant effects were found.

Figure 3:

Attitudes toward Social Hierarchies, Traditional Ideals, and Racial Policy



Discussion

Results revealed that those who voted for the Republican candidate, reported greater negative attitudes towards Mexicans. It remains unclear, however, if seeing and hearing a presidential candidate running for the most important and prestigious job in this country gave "permission" to those who held prejudices against Hispanics to publicly express their anti-Hispanic attitudes. Or, maybe the words used by the candidate during the campaign led people to associate Mexicans with personal threat (Kessler & Freeman, 2005). This research can give hope to those affected by anti-Mexican attitudes, such as the removal of the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program by providing insight for ways to reduce the prejudices that are harmful to so many.